



Ellis, K. (2015). Olivier Halanzier and the Operatic Museum in Late Nineteenth-Century France. *Music and Letters*, 96(3), 390-417.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/gcv043>

Peer reviewed version

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[dx.doi.org/10.1093/ml/gcv043](https://doi.org/10.1093/ml/gcv043)

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OLIVIER HALANZIER AND THE OPERATIC MUSEUM IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

BY KATHARINE ELLIS

IN GRAND NARRATIVES OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY PARISIAN OPERA, composers and singers understandably take centre stage. Nevertheless, a couple of theatre managers stand out for their contribution to the city's operatic history: first, Louis Véron (1798–1867) for his cementing of grand opera at the heart of the French repertory in the 1830s; second, Léon Carvalho (1825–1897) for championing Berlioz, Bizet, and Gounod during the 1850s and 1860s at the Théâtre-Lyrique and, later, Massenet and Bruneau at the Opéra-Comique. Both emerge as musicologically notable on account of their personal investment in new music. In this article I stand that sense of priority on its head in order to argue for the historical importance of a third manager, Olivier Halanzier (1819–1896).¹ By a combination of accident and design, Halanzier catalysed a profound institutional transformation—one still familiar to opera-goers across the world—at the Paris Opéra, which he directed from 1871 to 1879. From being a source of new repertoire for the nation's provincial theatres, the Opéra under Halanzier's management became a virtual, repertorial, museum whose curatorial aspects were echoed materially in the architectural eclecticism of the new Palais Garnier in which it was housed from 1875. His legacy saw the Opéra's museum status solidify with every ensuing change of management up to and beyond the turn of the twentieth century;² he

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¹ Hyacinthe-Olivier-Henry Halanzier-Dufrénoy (or Dufresnoy) (1819–1896). His preferred first name was Olivier. Véron's name appears in every survey of nineteenth-century French opera, frequently referenced via his (relatively) populist wish to make the Opéra the Versailles of the bourgeoisie. His six-volume memoirs were published in 1853–55 as *Mémoires d'un bourgeois*. Carvalho has emerged via Berlioz and Wagner studies and, in his own right, in T. J. Walsh, *Second Empire Opera: the Théâtre Lyrique Paris, 1851–1870* (London: John Calder, 1981), and Lesley Wright, 'Carvalho and the Opéra-Comique: l'art de se hâter lentement', in *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830–1914*, ed. Annegret Fauser & Mark Everist (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 99–126.

² I am not the first to invoke the idea of the operatic museum: William Gibbons explores a related concept in Chapter 1 of his study of Parisian opera, 1870–1914 entitled *Building the Operatic Museum: Eighteenth-Century Opera in fin-de-siècle Paris* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester

could easily have been Exhibit A in Pierre Boulez's coruscating attack of 1967 on opera as museum and voluntary ghetto, 'cut [...] off from time and change'.³ Moreover, in effecting this transformation with financial support from central government, Halanzier began a domino effect whereby public subsidy for new music, splendidly staged, was overtaken by the new phenomenon of public subsidy for new productions of older music, equally splendidly staged and with emphasis now shifted towards the interpretations of star performers. As a result, Halanzier helped bring French operatic policy and practice into line with developments in concert life, where the repetition *ad infinitum* of canonic works shifted attention away from compositional concerns and towards performance-related ones.⁴ As others, including Christophe Charle and Steven Huebner, have intimated, the Opéra's repertorial stagnation during the late nineteenth century crucially undermined its status as an operatic leader within Paris, across France, and internationally; even the Palais Garnier's own website dates the building's important premieres from nearly twenty years after its 1875 opening (Massenet's *Thaïs* of 1894), with the next French 'première' of suitable renown being the Opéra's revival of Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* in 1908.⁵ Yet the idea of 'stagnation' is just one side of the coin, and here I suggest that an appreciation of the official museum culture in play from the 1870s onwards is equally important to a full understanding of the demands of managing the Opéra, given the institution's new role in the Third Republic.

Many of the changes I have just mentioned were detected by Halanzier's

Press, 2013). However, his focus is entirely on works which constitute either 'musique classique' (Gluck, Mozart) or 'musique ancienne' (Rameau). Mine is both broader in terms of my concept of the museum, and narrower in my focus on a single institution, the Paris Opéra.

³ Pierre Boulez in *Der Spiegel*, 25 September 1967, cited in Robert Fink, 'After the Canon', in Helen M. Greenwald (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1065-1086, at 1065.

⁴ In terms of music criticism I discuss this phenomenon briefly in relation to Beethoven in my *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: 'La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris', 1834-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 122-126.

⁵ 'Frise chronologique des grandes créations' at <http://visitepalaisgarnier.fr/fr/>. Accessed 30 March 2015. On repertorial 'stagnation,' see Christophe Charle, 'Opera in France, 1870-1914: between Nationalism and Foreign Imports', in *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu*, ed. Victoria Johnson, Jane F. Fulcher and Thomas Ertman (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 243-266, at 245-250, and, in terms of conservative audience tastes, Steven Huebner, 'After 1850 at the Paris Opéra: Institution and Repertory', *The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera*, ed. David Charlton (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 291-317, at 303-305. Charle sees Paris as a whole continue its international operatic leadership into the twentieth century despite living through a financial 'crisis of the theatre'; but it is clear that the Opéra contributes little if anything to it.

contemporaries, though they framed their debates differently and in ways that prove surprisingly relevant to the ‘museum culture’ question. Whichever side of the French regionalist / centralist divide they supported, within 1870s Paris their perspectives were dominated by the centralising force of a capital city whose music education systems furnished exemplars of all kinds (composers, works, performers) and whose official *modus vivendi* typecast everywhere beyond the city as feebly aspiring to Parisian norms and standards. Charle writes, under the heading ‘Parisian creativity’, that one of the missions of Paris’s national stages was to foster new talent;⁶ but alongside the fact of that mission it is important to bear in mind the implications of a system designed for one-way cultural traffic (hence, in the case of opera, the provision of staging manuals to enable new works to be disseminated reliably). During the late nineteenth century the hierarchies resulting from centralisation encouraged professional jealousy, the close scrutiny of ‘outsiders’ in the capital, and, in theatre-management terms, a clearly-perceived division between a creative Parisian elite bringing new work into the public domain and a regional herd whose constituent members merely re-presented that work to their audiences as best they could, and whose profits—if indeed they could make any—were essentially parasitic on the creativity of others. Halanzier’s story plays out amid precisely such concerns.⁷

ENTER HALANZIER

Halanzier had four decades’ worth of regional experience when he entered the Opéra, and after his tenure at the Salle Le Peletier and the Palais Garnier he spent over fifteen years as president of a theatrical benevolent fund (the Association des Artistes Dramatiques). As such, he had a longer professional career than many of his contemporaries. He has, however, remained musicologically under-studied. Various reasons present themselves. Like Véron in the 1830s he had the effrontery to make a profit. Equally, although he was a native Parisian,

⁶ Charle, ‘Opera in France’, 249.

⁷ On the typical career paths towards national theatre management, see Frédérique Patureau, *Le Palais Garnier dans la société parisienne, 1875-1914* (Liège: Mardaga, 1991), 31-33, 46-53; and, for the Opéra-Comique Nicole Wild, ‘Esquisse de typologie des directeurs du Théâtre de l’Opéra-Comique au XIXe siècle’, in *Directeurs de théâtre, XIXe – XXe siècles: histoire d’une profession*, ed. Pascale Goetschel & Jean-Claude Yon (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2008), 61-70. On the regional circuit, see Malincha Gersin, ‘Trop de directeurs tue la direction? Parcours lyonnais au temps du privilège’, in *Directeurs de théâtre, XIXe – XXe siècles: histoire d’une profession*, ed. Pascale Goetschel & Jean-Claude Yon (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2008), 113-129, esp. 119-122. On the challenges of centralisation more generally, see my ‘Paris and the Provinces from the Revolution to World War I’, in *The Cambridge Companion to French Music*, ed. Simon Trezise (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 362-378.

in professional theatrical terms his long regional service rendered him a perpetual outsider. Finally, to his contemporaries, his artistic and management policy in Paris remained ‘regional’ in character, in that his repertorial choices were more derivative than creative, even during his time in Paris. Musicologically we can see that they helped form the core of the ‘museum’ and were of pivotal importance in respect of changing State priorities about the contractual conditions according to which the Opéra was run. But they sat uneasily with contemporary critics’ expectations—raised ever higher amid post-Franco-Prussian-War nationalism—that the role of the Paris Opéra was to take the aesthetic lead via high-profile operatic commissions, and thereby to inspire renewal in French and international operatic life.

Halanzier had the theatre in his bones. A child actor, assistant, and then partner to his theatre-manager mother until her death in 1842, he began his first solo directorship shortly afterwards, at Châlons-sur-Marne. Contemporary reports indicate that he married within the theatre industry, his (first?) wife being the daughter of Alexis Singier, who did two stints as manager at Lyon, covering the entire decade of the 1820s and then inaugurating the new Grand Théâtre in 1831.⁸ Halanzier’s first high-profile directorship seems to have been at Strasbourg from 1848, by which time he had been in theatre management for a decade.⁹ He stayed in post for seven challenging seasons, moving from his Strasbourg tenure to a further twenty years of directorships in first-tier towns (Table 1). Three patterns of behaviour revealed by archival evidence are striking: his propensity, after Strasbourg, to resign if finances became difficult;¹⁰ his willingness to contest any threat to 100% reimbursement of

⁸ Arthur Pougin, obituary in *Le Ménestrel* 63/1: 3 January 1897, 5; also Jules Lan, *Mémoires d’un chef de claque: souvenirs des théâtres* (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1883), 157. Both knew Halanzier personally. The two tranches of Alexis Singier’s Lyon career (1820-29; 1831-32) flank his appointment to the Opéra-Comique in 1830-31. Halanzier’s marriage to Singier’s daughter was possibly short-lived; the 1871 copy of his marriage certificate that forms part of his Légion d’Honneur file documents a ceremony of 25 March 1845 at which he married Marie-Louise Laffitte, who seems to be unrelated to Singier.

<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/leonore/leonore.htm>. Accessed 23 February 2015.

⁹ Much of the information here comes from an unsourced obituary in the Collection Rondel, signed ‘Stello’, which also dates Halanzier’s management experience as from the age of seventeen following his discovery, from her account-books, that his mother was being swindled. *F-Pn Arts du Spectacle* 8-Ro-749. Halanzier’s claims are consonant with this: in his informal and formal application letters for Strasbourg (20 July and 2 August 1848) he says he has a decade’s experience of theatre management, and cites his family connections to the theatre. Arch. Mun. Strasbourg 180 MW 55. In a letter of 17 March 1855 to the Mayor of Rouen he says he has been a theatre manager for eighteen years. *F-Pan* F²¹ 1215 Théâtres (Dieppe, Rouen) Rouen Folder: ‘Directeurs’.

¹⁰ Halanzier left Strasbourg having suffered significant losses of 28,000F after a transition from a *pro rata* wages system to one where salaries were guaranteed irrespective of takings. See the *Écho*

the security deposit he had provided at the start of each tenure;¹¹ and the presence of fallow years where he appears to have held no appointment (1855–56; 1857–58; 1864–65; 1867–68; 1869–70; 1870–71). Where other regional theatre managers stayed doggedly in post to the point of near bankruptcy, Halanzier escaped; and though he sometimes lost money, he left with enough in his pocket to support his family during lean times. Perhaps predictably, his reputation was that he was unbankruptable.

His Paris career might have begun with the expected apprenticeship in the city's secondary theatres had earlier opportunities not fallen through. That said, even the first such opportunity, apparently to the Théâtre-Lyrique in 1855, already placed him far above the world of vaudeville or melodrama at the boulevard theatres. The offer remains shrouded in mystery: T. J. Walsh finds him cited in the *Moniteur universel* of 14 April 1855 as successor to the director Émile Perrin, but I can find no reference to this appointment in other papers or indeed in currently available editions of the *Moniteur universel* itself.¹² At the time, Perrin was in the unusual position of managing both the Opéra-Comique and the Théâtre-Lyrique—which caused press disquiet about an unhealthy monopoly and was soon brought to an end. But although Halanzier left Strasbourg that year, having resigned the previous December, he did not take up a Paris appointment. In 1859, coincident with the position of *régisseur* at the Opéra becoming vacant, he dashed off a telegram and a follow-up note to the Ministre d'État (i.e. the Minister of the Interior) offering his candidacy for an unspecified appointment in terms that strongly suggested Paris: he signed off by saying he would now await the Minister's decision, 'persuaded that if it does not work this time, then another opportunity will present itself at which you can accept my services...'.¹³ By 1866 he was complaining that theatre in the provinces was becoming impossible.¹⁴

He would have accepted a Paris opportunity of 1868 with alacrity had the consequences of the 1864 *liberté des théâtres* not left him trapped in a regional job from

du théâtre (Strasbourg), no. 7: 17 February 1856, 1-2 for a salutary financial account of Halanzier's seven-year stint.

¹¹ His tenures in Strasbourg, Bordeaux and Lyon (1870) all ended in disputes over money and over whether contractual conditions had been fulfilled. See Arch. Dépt. Bas-Rhin TP 7/1; Arch. Mun. Bordeaux 1700 R13; Arch. Mun. Lyon 88 WP 006.

¹² T. J. Walsh, *Second Empire Opera: the Théâtre Lyrique Paris, 1851-1870* (London: John Calder, 1981), 64-65.

¹³ Letter of 15 April 1859: '...bien persuadé que si ce n'est pas pour cette fois, une autre occasion finira par se présenter où vous pourrez accepter mes services...' *F-Pan F*²¹ 1215 Théâtres (Dieppe, Rouen) Rouen Folder 'Corr. Gén.'

¹⁴ Letter to Émile Perrin, 23 November 1866. *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 444, II.

which there was no financially prudent way of resigning.¹⁵ That year, just after he had signed at Bordeaux, Camille Doucet, chief theatres administrator for the Maison de l'Empereur (Imperial Household), offered him the Théâtre-Lyrique. The offer was embarrassing for Doucet: it was he who had recommended Halanzier highly for Bordeaux at the end of February, yet by the middle of May he was trying to claw him back for Paris.¹⁶ Halanzier became ensnared in Paris–*province* politics. Caught between a local mayor who would neither release nor share him, and a civil servant who wanted to poach him but who no longer had the legal authority to annul his Bordeaux contract, Halanzier himself could do nothing but express frustration. He did so, notably, to Perrin, the Opéra's then director. The closeness of that relationship is significant, and it is entirely possible that his formal appointment at the Opéra came on Perrin's recommendation: Perrin was certainly involved in the 1868 process, in that Doucet used him as a means of pressurising Halanzier to abandon Bordeaux.¹⁷

When Halanzier was appointed to run the Paris Opéra in the summer of 1871, the decision appeared surprising. He was known to be the best theatre director of the French regions (he was nicknamed 'the General'¹⁸), but he was unproven in Paris, and his lack of experience in the capital cast doubt on the wisdom of the government ministers who presided over it. It was not unknown for a regional manager to be appointed to a Paris vacancy, but the Opéra post was in a different league from anything previously known: there was nothing more prestigious.¹⁹ Writing Halanzier's obituary Arthur Pougin, admittedly a close friend and supporter, noted the early hostility: 'People started out mocking this "provincial director" who arrived, they said, with narrow-minded, feeble and backward ideas, and who

¹⁵ The 1864 *liberté des théâtres* privatised the theatre industry across France (save for Paris's 'national' institutions), which meant that municipal theatre directors were no longer appointed by the State and could not be redeployed at will by government agents.

¹⁶ Letters of 28 February, 12 and 25 May from Doucet to the Préfet of the Gironde, Arch. Dépt. Gironde, 168 T 2. Doucet himself tried to strong-arm the mayor, to no avail: letter of 14 June 1868 Arch. Mun. Bordeaux 1700 R 13.

¹⁷ *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 444 contains undated notes (Doucet to Perrin) and drafts (Perrin to Halanzier) interleaved with Halanzier's letters to Perrin from this same period. On 24 June 1868 he lamented to Perrin that the Paris post was now beyond reach; he had accepted the Bordeaux position too soon. *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 444, II 'Relations avec les théâtres': Folder Halanzier.

¹⁸ E. M. Deshays, 'La musique', *Rouen en 1886: l'année rouennaise* (Rouen: Léon Deshays, 1887), 93.

¹⁹ Gersin notes that none of the three Lyonnais directors who went to Paris—including Halanzier—went to a straightforward post at a subsidised theatre. However, Halanzier's appointment to an Opéra in hiatus nevertheless represents a step change. Gersin, 'Trop de directeurs', 121.

would undoubtedly turn our Opéra into some kind of suburban theatre outpost'.²⁰ Halanzier was, as the veteran critic Henri Blaze de Bury put it in 1879, regarded as a pushy upstart whom an accident of history had allowed 'to undertake his apprenticeship at court' [s'initier à la cour].²¹

He was indeed pushy. Since at least 1865 Halanzier had kept in regular touch with Perrin, exchanging gossip and securing visiting singers from Paris for his tenures at Marseille, Bordeaux, and Lyon.²² After Perrin left the Opéra during the Commune of 1871 (he was politically undesirable), he did not return to his post once the Commune had been crushed. Far from turning French Grand Opera into a national cult and thereby saving the new Republic, as Wagner's *Eine Kapitulation* of 1870–71 facetiously suggested he might, Perrin moved sideways from the Opéra to the Comédie-Française.²³ Halanzier had released himself from Lyon in 1870 on grounds of the 'force majeure' of the war with Prussia. Available for work, on two occasions he offered his services, unsolicited but cognizant that the new Republic would need to test whether a return to normality was possible. A report of 27 November 1878 by senator Denormandie, writing for the Paris Commission des Théâtres, accordingly tells of Halanzier's temporary appointment to a government-sponsored post which did not officially exist and which was never advertised.²⁴ Given the circumstances, and the fact that many other Parisian theatre directors had already fled the capital during the Siege of 1870,²⁵ Halanzier was a plausible candidate: he was known to be decisive, a stickler for production quality, dedicated to the needs of his company and his public, and financially

²⁰ 'On commença par railler ce "directeur de province", qui arrivait, disait-on, avec des idées étroites, mesquines, arriérées, et qui allait faire sans doute de notre Opéra comme une sorte de succursale des scènes de banlieue.' *Ménestrel* 63/1: 3 January 1897, 5.

²¹ *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 September 1879, 445.

²² The correspondence in *F-Pan* AJ¹³ 444, II, comprises over 120 letters and telegrams to Perrin. The first is dated 13 June 1865 but indicates an already existing relationship. Loans of singers from Paris constituted Halanzier's customary way of bringing some variety to his resident companies and dealing with the problems of sudden illness among principals: he had a similar relationship with Léon Carvalho at the Théâtre-Lyrique during his first tenure at Marseille.

²³ Wagner lampooned the Opéra, its director, its traditions (frivolous) and its artistic contribution (overblown by chauvinistic self-regard) in this infamous anti-French skit. See *Richard Wagner's Prose Works*, trans. William Ashton Ellis, vol. 5 (London: Kegan Paul, 1895), 3 – 33, esp. 16 – 18 (Perrin) and 33. On the Opéra during the Commune, see Delphine Mordey, 'Moments musicaux: high culture in the Paris Commune', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22/1 (2010), 1 – 31, esp. 13 – 26.

²⁴ *F-Pan* AJ¹³ 1202. Opéra. Comptabilité. 'Commission des théâtres. Rapport des la Sous-Commission. Question de l'Opéra', 2.

²⁵ *F-Po* Arch. de l'Opéra: Journal de la Régie, 1870 (28 October), cited in Delphine Mordey, "'Dans le palais du son, on fait de la farine": Performing at the Opéra during the 1870 Siege of Paris', *Music & Letters* 93/1 (2012), 1-28, at 9, fn. 49.

savvy—which in the precarious environment of French theatre was a recommendation in itself. Sure enough, in a little over three months he took the Opéra company at the Salle Le Peletier from near-destitution on fractional pay to a situation where, in October 1871, takings enabled him to restore wages to 100 percent.²⁶ He was at that point confirmed in post for eight years, to the end of October 1879. Almost immediately, in 1872, he approached Verdi, not to commission a new work but to request to mount one that was fast achieving blockbuster status: *Aida*. That particular project stalled before it started, but the request itself is indicative equally of Halanzier's mindset (in which repertoire trumped commissions) and of the reasons underpinning his rapid success in restoring profitability.

ART VS. BUSINESS

By 1874 we find Halanzier facing growing disquiet about that profitability—about whether or not he was an 'artistic' theatre director, and whether his exceptional prosperity at the Opéra actually proved a degree of philistinism. Disquiet coincided with preparations for the move to the sumptuous Palais Garnier, which only compounded the sense of unjustified good fortune: Halanzier, suddenly in line to be the Garnier's inaugural director (it opened officially on 5 January 1875), seemed to have been handed a priceless gift—one denied to those who had devoted years of graft to the capital's lesser stages. Only later would the challenge of breaking even at the Garnier become widely recognised.²⁷ Characteristically, Halanzier saw it immediately, a spot of brinkmanship (he briefly resigned) securing him compensation via a 30% hike in the highest subscriptions tariff in December 1874.²⁸ To onlookers such behaviour appeared rapacious, and unacceptable. An obituarist whom I can identify only by his pen-name, 'Stello', recounts two points in 1873 and 1874 at which opponents of his tenure nearly succeeded in persuading the ever-changing Ministres des Beaux-Arts to seek or accept his resignation.²⁹ Léon Escudier, director of *L'Art musical* and publisher of Verdi, claimed to be especially exercised, seeing nothing more than 'a poor provincial opera house' [un pauvre Opéra de province] in Halanzier's management of the Salle Ventadour, and doubting that he could raise his game beyond that of a 'businessman' [industriel] on taking possession of the new home for what Escudier described as the best

²⁶ *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 446. Opéra. Admin. Halanzier, 1870-1878, I. Folder Société des Artistes.

²⁷ An official report of 1904 makes for stark reading: a 60% rise in operating costs at the Opéra between 1864 and 1904, due mostly to the fixed costs necessary to run a 'palace' as opposed to a 'theatre'. *F-Pn AJ*¹³ 1202.

²⁸ Reports in *Art musical* 13/50 and 52: 10 and 24 December 1874.

²⁹ Unsourced obituary in the Collection Rondel. *F-Pn Arts du Spectacle* 8-Ro-749.

stage in the world.³⁰

The new fragility of Halanzier's situation is well illustrated in two seemingly unrelated cartoons which nevertheless mirror each other. The first is from 1868, reflecting Halanzier's time at the Grand-Théâtre in Bordeaux; the other is from the Paris *Charivari* of 6 October 1875 (Pl. 1 & 2). In 1868 Halanzier is in command, with Lilliputian men desperate to be part of his company. They clamber up the theatre's columns, fight each other to the ground, and swarm up his fishing line, ready to be caught. 'I've got a bite...', gloats Halanzier via the caption. The image of 1875 shows more Lilliputians; but now the Atlas-like Halanzier has the weight of the Paris Opéra on his shoulders and is himself being pulled in every direction from ground level. He could be toppled, except that the caption by Alfred le Petit warns Halanzier's enemies of the opposite possibility: 'You will not get what you want. By jealously pulling in all directions, you just wedge him in place.'³¹

The following year *La Presse*, via its main critic Léon Kerst, intensified the attack with a series of damning articles aimed at removing Halanzier from his post.³² The 'regional director' accusation resurfaced and Kerst rebaptised the Opéra not the Académie *Nationale* de Musique, but the Académie *Commerciale*.³³ The grounds: that Halanzier had done too few new works; that he had implemented low production standards; and that he had mismanaged an enormous public subsidy of 800,000 francs for his own profit. The first charge was arguable, and although presented by Kerst as though it were a first, it was in fact common to many a subsidised theatre administration in nineteenth-century Paris. The second was belied by other reviews; the third was specious, since it was in the government's interest for the Opéra to generate large surpluses: clause 81b of Halanzier's second contract, of 1874, specified that 50 percent of any profit was to go straight back to the State.³⁴ By the summer of 1878, the State had duly benefited to the tune of over 700,000 francs, which amounted to

³⁰ *Art musical* 13/13: 26 March 1874, 97. It is possible that he already harboured the wish to re-open the Théâtre-Italien (closed since 1873) as a Verdi theatre—which he did between 1876 and 1878 with *Aida*, *La Forza del destino*, and *Rigoletto*, before collapsing under a million francs' worth of debt. Anik Devriès-Lesure, 'Escudier', in *Dictionnaire de la musique e France au XIXe siècle*, ed. Joël-Marie Fauquet (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 434.

³¹ 'Vous n'arriverez pas à ce que vous voulez; En tirant en tous sens, jaloux, vous le calez.'

³² Articles of June, July, August and December 1876 were given a dedicated introduction and gathered together in a pamphlet of 1877: Léon Kerst, *L'Opéra et M. Halanzier* (Paris: Au Bureau d'Administration du Journal *La Presse*, 1877).

³³ Kerst, *L'Opéra*, 27 (Article of 5 December 1876).

³⁴ *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 1187 (Cahiers des charges).

nearly a year's subsidy.³⁵ The government did not allow Halanzier to be toppled. Instead its officers reported in eulogistic terms on his directorship in 1877, and it was Halanzier who, when the financial tide turned against him, decided when to resign.³⁶ While Senator Denormandie's report of 1878 can be read as containing an undercurrent of opprobrium towards Halanzier's management, his committee's diagnoses of the Opéra's problems never laid the blame at Halanzier's door. Moreover, he was promoted in that same year from being a 'Chevalier' of the Légion d'honneur (conferred in 1871), to being an 'Officier'.

CRISIS, NOVELTY AND REPERTORY

Among those who have written about Halanzier (and not many people have), there are two main strands of interpretation about his Paris years: firstly, that of Nicole Wild who views him as 'brilliant' and as triumphing over adversity; secondly, that of Frédérique Patureau, who sees him, more critically, as an opportunist.³⁷ Both are right. Wild sees post-Commune chaos and understands the devastation wrought soon afterwards by a fire at the Opéra in October 1873. This disaster reduced to ashes the Opéra's home at the rue Le Peletier and led to Halanzier's company camping out for over a year at the Théâtre Italien, sharing the stage and all facilities at the Salle Ventadour and subsisting by repeating a dozen well-worn

³⁵ Government budget report prepared by Antonin Proust, taking in the period 5 January 1875 to 31 August 1878. Cited in *Art musical*, 17/45: 7 November 1878, 358, where Halanzier's cumulative profits after deductions are listed as 1,673,439 fr. 58 (ibid.).

³⁶ Inspection report of Ministère des Beaux-Arts, 1877 (*F-Pan* F²¹ 4656) cited in Patureau, *Le Palais Garnier*, 112. Halanzier resigned on 22 January, the reply of 31 January from Agénor Bardoux, Ministre de l'Instruction Publique, des Cultes et des Beaux-Arts, indicating that he had requested to leave as soon as possible (cited in *Art musical*, 18/6: 6 February 1879, 47). Clause 81b of his 1874 contract allowed him to resign should he suffer losses of 100,000 francs. Ministerial change and government indecision about the future funding regime for the Opéra made the process messy and protracted. Halanzier eventually served until 15 July 1879, a few months short of his contract end-date of 31 October. A sympathetic portrait by the librettist Louis Gallet suggests he never recovered from the bruising circumstances of his departure from the Opéra. Louis Gallet, 'Quatre directeurs de l'Opéra', *Revue internationale de musique*, no. 4 (15 April 1898), 208-221, at 213-216. His piece also evokes Perrin, Vaucorbeil and Ritt.

³⁷ Nicole Wild, 'Halanzier', in *Dictionnaire de la musique en France au XIXe siècle*, 556; Patureau, *Le Palais Garnier*, 86. In the middle, and referring specifically to production aesthetics, we might place Evan Baker, who judges unnamed French opera managers as 'timid' for not using the fires of 1873 at the Opéra and 1887 at the Opéra-Comique as launch-pads for a revolution in styles of repertory-opera staging. See Evan Baker, *From the Score to the Stage: an Illustrated History of Continental Opera Production and Staging* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 251. Charle uses the same word—'timid'—of the Opéra and Opéra-Comique alike during this period but sides more with Patureau, citing the Opéra specifically as taking the 'easy way out' amid the throngs who came more for the new building than for new music (Charle, 'Opera in France', 245, 249).

works.³⁸ Patureau, by contrast emphasises the later history. Those dark days of 1873–74 hastened completion of the Palais Garnier and gave Halanzier the keys to Paris's greatest new tourist attraction, swelling audience numbers to capacity night after night. Moreover, just as the building was beginning to lose its novelty for Parisians, its box office was sustained for over six months by hordes of provincial and foreign visitors attracted to the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle. Halanzier, then, weathered the storms of 1871 and 1873; but he took full advantage of the fair winds that followed.

These three exceptional circumstances of the 1870s—fire, Palais, and Exposition—formed the backdrop to all accusations of philistinism and fortune-grabbing. Even one of his calmer critics, Adolphe Jullien, lamented the extent to which the new Palais Garnier's director was behaving opportunistically:

At our premier opera house, the entire year is summed up in the rather less-than-solemn inauguration of the magnificent pilgrims' watering-hole constructed by M. Garnier on the boulevard des Capucines, and which all the world's peoples are queueing up to visit. Since 5 January, when this ethnographic queue started, and to the great satisfaction of the director, who four times a week takes in a good 20,000F of ticket revenue, the Opera has done nothing but return to the stage its major repertory works, or rather, those that are the most favoured, not by serious amateurs, but by the high society which fills the hall to the rafters. Most of these operas have been re-mounted with great luxury of staging, which minimises spectator boredom during acts, as they await the desired moment when they can spill out into the foyer and the staircase to admire the gilding, sculpture, mouldings and decorations which M. Garnier has lavished on dazzled eyes. *Music is finished!*³⁹

The tourist-trap jibe was all too true. The Opéra correspondence from this period groans with

³⁸ They were: Auber, *La Muette de Portici*; Donizetti, *La Favorite*; Gounod, *Faust*; Halévy, *La Juive*; Meyerbeer, *Robert-le-Diable*, *Les Huguenots*, and *Le Prophète*; Mozart, *Don Juan*; Rossini, *Guillaume Tell*; Thomas, *Hamlet*; Verdi, *Le Trouvère*. Delibes's *Coppélia* was the standby ballet.

³⁹ 'Toute l'année musicale, pour le premier de nos théâtres lyriques, se résume dans l'inauguration assez peu solennelle du magnifique caravansérail construit par M. Garnier au boulevard des Capucines, et que tous les peuples du globe viennent visiter à la file. Depuis le 5 janvier que dure ce défilé ethnographique, à la grande satisfaction du directeur qui encaisse quatre fois par semaine vingt beaux mille francs, l'Opéra n'a fait que remettre en scène les œuvres capitales de son répertoire, ou simplement celles qui sont le plus goûtées, non pas des amateurs sérieux, mais du public mondain qui emplit la salle jusqu'au faite. La plupart de ces opéras ont été remontés avec un grand luxe de décors, qui permet aux spectateurs de ne pas trop s'ennuyer durant les actes en attendant le moment désiré de se répandre au foyer et sur l'escalier pour admirer les dorures, sculptures, moulures et enluminures que M. Garnier a prodiguées aux regards éblouis. *È finita la musica!* Adolphe Jullien, *Revue de Paris* 5/16 (1875), 149-155, at 149.

requests from foreign and regional visitors for guided tours of the new operatic palace.⁴⁰ Halanzier himself is reported (by a supporter) as saying that the Palais Garnier staircase was ‘the finest work in my repertoire’ [la plus belle œuvre de mon répertoire].⁴¹ Equally, he became adept at fending off requests to consider new works, his administration citing the ‘exceptional’ [anormale] situation within which he was operating.⁴² His entire tenure had been abnormal, but while the lack of new works could be tolerated while his company was camping out at the Salle Ventadour, Article 9 of his 1874 contract made it abundantly clear that in the Palais Garnier he was required to produce the customary six acts of new material every year.⁴³

The question of ‘art’ and the ‘directeur-artiste’ rubbed against that of tourism. Camille Saint-Saëns is insightful here. He was an interested party, and a disappointed one in that Halanzier rejected *Samson et Dalila*; but while respecting Halanzier as a man of the theatre he viewed him in no uncertain terms as a manager rather than a musician. As he pointed out in 1879, having a pure administrator at the helm was nothing new among directors of the Paris Opéra—indeed the idea of a professional musician being appointed to the job had seemed an implausible dream for decades.⁴⁴ He had already implied as early as 1873 that Halanzier was musically illiterate, and that in consequence his Opéra reading committee had to take all responsibility for decisions on new scores.⁴⁵ In 1879 he was

⁴⁰ *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 448 Opéra. Correspondance, 1874-1877, I (1875).

⁴¹ Unsourced obituary signed ‘Un abonné’. Collection Rondel, *F-Pn Arts du Spectacle* 8-Ro-749.

⁴² *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 448 Opéra. Correspondance, 1874-1877, II (1876) reply of 12 April 1876 from the Opéra’s Secrétaire-Général to B. Alciator, who was lobbying for a Paris production of the singer Brion d’Orgeval’s five-act opera *Ivan IV*, recently premiered in Marseille (letters of 10 and 14 April). Alciator described the piece as a roaring success, but it lasted a mere three performances despite there being room at the end of the season for many more.

⁴³ *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 1187 (Cahiers des charges).

⁴⁴ Article in *Le Voltaire*, 2, no. 378: 18 July 1897, reprinted in Marie-Gabrielle Soret (ed.), *Camille Saint-Saëns: écrits sur la musique et les musiciens 1870-1921* (Paris: Vrin, 2012), 199-202. When the composer Auguste-Emmanuel Vaucorbeil was nominated as Halanzier’s successor in 1879, Saint-Saëns was jubilant that the seemingly impossible had happened. Doubtless he had in mind that Vaucorbeil might accept *Samson et Dalila* where Halanzier had rejected it; but he was unfortunate on that count, and lucky only with Vaucorbeil’s order for *Henry VIII*. Philippe Blay’s recent work on the Opéra-Comique in the late 1890s reveals a similar split between ‘artists’ and ‘administrators’ in the field of candidates wishing to replace the recently deceased Carvalho, and notes that on financial grounds, the appointment committee at the Ministère des Beaux-Arts simply discarded all the applications from ‘artists’. See Philippe Blay, ‘“Un théâtre français, tout à fait français”, ou un débat fin-de-siècle sur l’Opéra-Comique’, *Revue de musicologie* 87/1 (2001), 105-144, at 111-113.

⁴⁵ Review of Eugène Diaz’s *La Coupe du roi de Thulé* in *La Renaissance littéraire et artistique*, 2/2: 15 February 1873, 15-16, signed ‘Phémus’. Reprinted in Marie-Gabrielle Soret (ed.), *Camille Saint-Saëns: écrits sur la musique et les musiciens 1870-1921* (Paris: Vrin, 2012), 91-94, at 92.

explicit, reporting an admission from Halanzier himself that he was a musical ignoramus.⁴⁶

Yet Halanzier's profile was complex. Firstly he knew whom to employ: his stage director [*régis seur*] at the Opéra in 1874 and 1875 was none other than the theatre manager Léon Carvalho, whom no one would at that point have regarded as anything other than a 'directeur-artiste'.⁴⁷ Secondly, if his weak reading skills left him ill-equipped to deal with the new, his experience of the standard repertoire was by contrast that of an insider, and he must have had exceptionally good ears. During rehearsals, says Arnold Mortier at *Le Figaro*, 'he ceases to be a director [...]. He sings his part in an ensemble, languorously warbles a tenor's romance, starts up a baritone's bravura aria or gracefully negotiates the prima donna's most complicated vocalises.' And in case we readers should be too sceptical, Mortier adds, 'And note how no one dreams of laughing at him, because despite his lack of transcendent vocal skill, M. Halanzier has such an understanding of his repertoire that his intervention always results in a useful lesson for those who observe or hear it.'⁴⁸ An obituarist signing himself 'Un abonné' said much the same thing.⁴⁹ Halanzier had also been a major contributor to that 'standard repertoire' in unusual ways during his time in the regions: he was, for instance, one of the few regional directors of the Second Empire to do Mozart operas (*Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*); and he often took on new operas very soon after their Paris premieres (including Verdi's *Le trouvère* at Lyon in April 1857, less than four months after Paris, and *L'Africaine* at Marseille in April 1866, trailing Paris by just under a year).

Genuinely new works were Halanzier's Achilles' heel. He preceded those pioneers of the 1890s who pointedly did French national premieres in the regions;⁵⁰ instead, during his time at Strasbourg, Lyon, Rouen, Marseille, and Bordeaux he pounced on the best that

⁴⁶ *Le Voltaire*, 2, no. 378: 18 July 1897, in Soret (ed.), *Camille Saint-Saëns*, 200.

⁴⁷ See Fauquet (ed.), *Dictionnaire*, 219.

⁴⁸ '...n'est plus un directeur [...] Il fait sa partie dans un ensemble, roucoule langoureusement une romance de ténor, entonne l'air de bravoure du baryton ou exécute avec grâce les vocalises les plus compliquées de la prima donna. / Et remarquez que nul ne songe à en rire, car M. Halanzier, à défaut de qualités vocales transcendantes, a une connaissance telle de son répertoire qu'il résulte toujours de son intervention un enseignement utile pour ceux qui le voient ou l'entendent. Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre [Arnold Mortier], *Les soirées parisiennes de 1877* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878), 212-213.

⁴⁹ Unsourced obituary signed 'Un abonné'—who could of course be Mortier himself. Collection Rondel, *F-Pn Arts du Spectacle* 8-Ro-749.

⁵⁰ On such decentralist ventures in Rouen, for instance, see Clair Rowden, 'Decentralisation and Regeneration at the Théâtre des Arts, Rouen, 1889–1891', *Revue de musicologie* 94 (2008), 139-180. Lyon, Nice and Monte Carlo pursued their own versions of such decentralisation, as, in a different way, did directors of the Romano-Greek outdoor venues of the Midi.

centralist Paris had to offer. Everywhere he worked he expanded the repertoire, but such expansion always came with support (the obligatory staging manual) from the mother ship. As far as I can tell, he arrived at the Paris Opéra never having conceptualised or staged a brand new work from scratch. For his detractors, this was proof enough of his ‘regional’ level of operation and his ineligibility for ‘artist-director’ status,⁵¹ and the situation was made worse by his also bringing to Paris a propensity to satisfy the public rather than to lead it. The merely superficial similarity of theatre management contracts between Paris and the regions is here revealed for what it is. When Halanzier arrived in Paris, mounting ‘new’ operas in regional contracts meant they should be new to the town in question; in the contracts of the capital’s subsidised theatres, ‘new’ meant a world premiere. The charge against him, then, was that like any regional theatre director who knew his place, he was capable of assimilating and imitating what Paris had created, but that his ability to select a new work wisely or, in conjunction with a *régisseur*, to mount a ‘création’ of his own, was unproven. The argument could be couched in terms of quantity or quality or success—or any mixture thereof.

A document of 1878 in the Opéra archives from one of Halanzier’s detractors does the first, presenting comparative statistics for the productivity rates for new opera of every director of the Paris Opéra since 1800.⁵² The premieres cited amount to an average of around ten new acts per year across the 78-year period. They are, however, unevenly distributed. The long tenures of Léon Pillet (6 years, 81 acts: average 13.5) and Nestor Roqueplan (7 years, 83 acts: average 12), covering the period 1840 to 1854, provide a stark comparison with the productivity rates of the 1870s.⁵³ Perrin, in the 1860s, already offered fewer premieres, with 42 new acts in 7.5 years (average 5.6); but Halanzier was the slowest to date, with 25 acts in 7 years (average 3.5). His contract of 1874 required nearly twice that. By the time he left the Opéra he had raised his average to a little over 4 acts per year, having

⁵¹ See, for instance, Escudier in *Art musical*, 13/16: 16 April 1874, 122, where this argument appears as part of a weekly series of front-page articles attacking the plans for the running of the new Opéra.

⁵² *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 446 Opéra. Admin. Halanzier, 1870-1878, I. Complaint of 10 July 1878.

⁵³ However, productivity does not necessarily mean repertorial longevity. Pillet and Roqueplan duly produced new works, but most quickly fell out of use, catalysing press accusations of stagnation. An archived list of repertory works restored between the 1873 fire and 1900 indicates that these outwardly productive administrations presided over a dearth of lasting works, especially by the French: nothing by a French composer is listed between Halévy’s *La Reine de Chypre* of 1841 and Thomas’s *Hamlet* of 1868. The three repertorial successes are Meyerbeer’s *Le Prophète* (1849), Verdi’s *Le Trouvère* (1857), and Meyerbeer’s *L’Africaine* (posth., 1865). *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 120 Opéra. Comptabilité.

supplied 33 new acts during eight years of administration.

Already in 1875, as an emerging shortfall became apparent, Halanzier was forced to defend his policy as part of the annual budget round. His response, published in June of that year as *Exposé de ma gestion de l'Opéra*, focused on his rescue of the company in 1871, his contracting of international-quality singers, and his revivification of the old repertoire. He had, he said, restored to the Parisian public:

... theatrical pomp, the best possible performances of our masterworks, and finally, respect for the traditions that have meant that the Opéra, whatever one might say, was and is still the premier theatre in the world. ... Furthermore [he wrote], on what grounds can one challenge my artistic sense? Have I not restored the entire repertory according to the desired conditions of splendour? Is the *mise-en-scène* inferior, less well-prepared, less sumptuous than before?⁵⁴

Called to account again in 1876, Halanzier finally offered a defence based on his presentation of new works: he claimed that he had equalled the productivity rate of his predecessor (Table 3).⁵⁵ However, he was more concerned to point out that in seventeen months he had restored eight operas and two ballets to the Opéra's audience, and that in another eight weeks he would be able to add Weber's *Le Freyschutz* and Meyerbeer's *Le Prophète*. His restoration of the old repertoire for the new opera house had, he wrote, to be taken into account when judging his productivity;⁵⁶ and the text reveals no hint of disappointment at such a distraction of his energies away from investment in the new. Investment in the *modern*, however, was a different matter, especially when he knew audiences craved it.

It is precisely in this respect that one of Halanzier's greatest regrets was *Aida*, a modern yet repertoire work that got away, and one which as early as 1872 he had tried to ensure would be counted as a 'new' work [création] for the purposes of his requirement to

⁵⁴ '... la pompe théâtrale, l'exécution de nos chefs-d'oeuvre aussi complète que possible, et enfin le respect des traditions qui ont fait et qui font encore de l'Opéra, quoi qu'on en dise, le premier théâtre du monde. [...] Sur quoi se fonde-t-on, d'ailleurs, pour me contester le sens artistique? N'ai-je pas remis sur pied tout le répertoire dans les conditions de splendeur voulue? la mise en scène est-elle moins bien réglée, moins étudiée, moins somptueuse qu'autrefois?', Halanzier, *Exposé de ma gestion de l'Opéra: 1871-1875* (Paris: Imprimerie Centrale des Chemins de Fer. A Chaix et Cie, 1875), 4.

⁵⁵ Halanzier, *Théâtre National de l'Opéra: à Messieurs les membres de la Commission du Budget* (Paris: Imprimerie Centrale des Chemins de Fer. A Chaix et Cie, 1876), 6.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

provide six new acts per year.⁵⁷ Given its genre, scale and splendour, it was entirely reasonable for him to claim this prize for France's most prestigious stage—the sets for the Cairo première had even come from the Opéra's workshops. Halanzier had been known as a champion of the composer's music since the 1850s: his two tenures of the 1860s at Marseille, in particular, were awash with Verdi. But his contract-related request was apparently met with chauvinist disdain over the giving of priority to a foreigner.⁵⁸ Moreover, Verdi refused him on grounds that the Opéra had already caused him quite enough grief every time his music had featured there.⁵⁹ Within Paris, *Aida* went to the rival Théâtre Italien (22 April 1876), run at that point by none other than Verdi's French publisher Léon Escudier, and given in Italian. It says much about public (as opposed to critics') acceptance of 'repertorial stagnation', and Halanzier's understanding of his audience's predilections, that to rival that 1876 Paris premiere he turned to one of the oldest chestnuts of all, Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*. Forty years old, it filled the hall, reaping Halanzier maximum house takings of 21,000 F.⁶⁰ Ironically, *Aida*'s French premiere would take place not in Paris but on Halanzier's old stamping ground, the Grand-Théâtre in Marseille (31 January 1877), and by the time it reached the Opéra it had also been done in Bordeaux. Parisians finally saw their first French version at the Théâtre-Lyrique in July 1878; and only under Emmanuel Vaucorbeil, director of the Opéra from 1879 to 1884, did the opera finally reach the Garnier's stage (22 March 1880). Significantly, it now sported the 'new' work status Halanzier had unsuccessfully requested eight years earlier.⁶¹

CONSTRUCTING THE OPÉRA AS MUSEUM

By this time the Opéra, its architecture historically eclectic to a fault, was officially classed as a 'museum' [musée]. Practice had, however, preceded policy, and Halanzier's contracts of 1871 and 1874 were already transitional, offering justification for his emphasis on current repertory in preference to the 'potential repertory' of new works (Table 4). Where Perrin's contract of 1866 had emphasised the need to provide 'splendour' and 'striking luxury' [splendeur, éclat de luxe] that would distinguish his Imperial theatre from others of lesser

⁵⁷ See the account by Arnold Mortier in *Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre* [Arnold Mortier], *Les soirées parisiennes de 1880* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1881), 132.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Letter of 21 August 1872, reprinted by Léon Escudier in *L'Art musical* 14/25: 24 June 1875, 193-194. Escudier pointed out rather acidly that *Don Carlos* had been cut from the Opéra's repertoire despite being a triumph everywhere else.

⁶⁰ As reported in *Le Ménestrel*, 42/22: 30 April 1876, 171.

⁶¹ Patureau, *Le Palais Garnier*, 158-160.

importance, Article I of Halanzier's 1871 contract prefaced 'éclat' with 'dignité' and silently dropped 'luxue'.⁶² Continuing the tradition of post-1870 reaction against frivolity, this contract required that the Opéra be distinctive not by virtue of its luxury but 'for its selection of early or modern works' [par le choix des œuvres anciennes ou modernes], and for its high musical and production standards. The shift of emphasis here would prove significant, and while the word 'ancienne' did not indicate a return to Lully and Rameau along the lines of the term 'la musique ancienne', it is striking that the vocabulary used was not 'nouvelle' but the much looser 'moderne'. Among contracts for the Opéra, this opening article of 1871 contained the first official solidification of a concept of repertory—something that had long been practised in Paris as part of the traditional separation of genres across theatres, but which had never before formed an explicit part of the opera house's mission statement on (implicit) grounds of artistic value. The revision of 1874, for the new Palais Garnier, dropped the word 'dignité' but retained 'splendeur' as the Opéra's core mission—and again demanded distinctiveness via the 'selection of early and modern works' combined with musical and scenic artistry of the highest order. The provision of new works was covered in a later article in all three contracts, but the changes to Article 1 in 1871 and 1874 in relation to 1866 meant that only from the early 1870s did references to 'ouvrages nouveaux' (Article 9) appear in counterpoint with the 'œuvres modernes' of the opening article. A potential fissure between repertory and new music opened from this point, and in this context, Halanzier's priorities of 1876, and his attention to reviving Weber's *Le Freyschutz* (with Berlioz's recitatives) alongside the French repertory of Meyerbeer, take on a new rationale: the Opéra was being reconfigured as a showcase for great French or French-assimilated grand operas, reaching back to the 1820s and extending to modern classics such as his attempted *Aida*, which though not 'new', was assuredly 'modern'. When Vaucorbeil arrived in 1879 the commitment to the past was decisively strengthened, with a mission statement on his contract of 16 May that read: 'The Opéra is not a theatre for experimentation: it should be regarded as the museum of music.'⁶³ Halanzier had officially opened that museum, and he had done so in accordance with the spirit of his contracts. In the case of the 1874 contract he had done so in accordance with the letter, too, since here the State's priorities were made abundantly clear. Following the fire, an emergency grant of 2,400,000 francs had already been awarded for the reconstruction of the Opéra's repertory; now the 50% public share of any profit was, at ministerial discretion, to be ploughed back into the 'reconstruction'

⁶² For the 1866 contract see *F-Pan* AJ¹³ 1187 (Cahiers des charges); for 1871 see *F-Po* Arch. De l'Opéra P. A. 1 1866 / 1871.

⁶³ *F-Pan* AJ¹³ 1187 (Cahiers des charges).

[réfection] of any of that repertory for which the emergency grant proved insufficient (Art. 81b).⁶⁴

The fire on the night of 28/29 October 1873 was all-consuming. It ripped through the Opéra in the most material of ways, destroying over 5,000 costumes and the entire sets, props, and orchestral parts for fifteen operas, along with 74 other stage-sets and 31 state-owned instruments.⁶⁵ It left Halanzier with two repertorial jobs: to fulfil Article 9 of his contract (to mount new works) and to restore the historical repertory, from scratch, at breakneck speed. It was lost on no one that this latter task was perfectly suited to a regional director in Paris, while the former task was not. Together, these circumstances prolonged the abnormality of Halanzier's tenure for reasons very different from the privations of 1871. Where his task after the Siege had been to rescue the finances and restore the company and audiences alike, from 1874, when the prospect of opening the Salle Garnier became real, his urgent, new, and publicly-funded project was to rebuild the old and overwhelmingly French repertoire. He spent huge sums on costumes, scenery, and stage machinery, including 80,000F—a sum comparable to the annual subsidy of a second-tier municipal theatre—on a single item, a ship for Act III of *L'Africaine*.⁶⁶ I have found no evidence that there was high-level administrative debate as to whether the full-scale revival of works up to fifty years old was the right thing to do; and it is notable that discussion in the Assemblée Nationale on 28 March 1874 focused on the Opéra building project as a whole, rather than the details of artistic implementation.⁶⁷ There was, however, a reaction in the press. The indefatigable Escudier lambasted Halanzier for his efforts and asked incredulously whether, after all the millions spent on the new building, it would be 'destined to mount nothing but revivals of works half a century old' [ne serait destiné qu'aux reprises d'ouvrages datant d'un demi-siècle].⁶⁸ At the same time, and accepting that the museum had to be rebuilt, he rhetorically

⁶⁴ Halanzier's restoration of twelve operas and two ballets absorbed all the original grant, all the State's share of the profits to the end of the 1877/78 season, and an estimated sum based on Halanzier's final year of management (*Art musical*, 17/45: 7 November 1878, 358). As anticipated in the 1874 contract, which also gave his successor access to the State's 50% of profits, the restoration project was so vast that it remained incomplete at the end of Halanzier's tenure.

⁶⁵ Figures from Georges d'Heylli, *Foyers et coulisses. Histoire anecdotique des théâtres de Paris*, 3: *Opéra* (Paris: Tresse, 1875), 369. The sub-committee reporting to the Assemblée Nationale discussion of 28 March 1874, represented by M. Caillaux, cited nineteen major works lost in whole or in part. *Moniteur universel*, 30 March 1874, 468.

⁶⁶ Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre [Arnold Mortier], *Les soirées parisiennes de 1877* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878), 488.

⁶⁷ *Moniteur universel*, 30 March 1874, 467-468. The vote was carried with a majority of 273 among 544 voters, with 434 in favour, 60 against and 50 abstentions (ibid, 468).

⁶⁸ *Art musical* 13/16: 16 April 1874, 121-122.

sought reassurance that plans for new scenery—which had now been sketched by Halanzier, officially approved, and commissioned—would involve new designs and lead to a new *mise en scène*. In terms of performance the Garnier should be a living museum, in other words, not a dead one.⁶⁹ In the event the *mise en scène* was retained, but even Escudier's journal could not deny that the sets and costumes for the new *Guillaume Tell* and *Hamlet* were respectively 'very fine' [très-beaux] and even 'magnificent' [magnifiques]; and as less partisan journals reported, they were indeed new designs.⁷⁰ All such comments on Halanzier's new productions played into the nascent 'museum' idea: to borrow from Evan Baker, they respected a pan-European tradition of 'exemplary stagings' utilising variants all based on an aesthetic of picturesque realism.⁷¹ And while at *Le Figaro* Arnold Mortier, for instance, could be counted on to support Halanzier's endeavours, the terms of his reception of *L'Africaine* are historiographically useful beyond their immediate context as publicity: '*L'Africaine* is the least performed of Meyerbeer's masterpieces, and thanks to the new casting, the new costumes and the new scenery, one might have thought one were attending a premiere.'⁷² A revival of the 'modern' accordingly became the 'new', with the focus now squarely on production quality.

EXPANDING THE MUSEUM

After Halanzier ended his tenure, an emphasis on conservation and revival became progressively explicit in official support for the Opéra. Comparative analysis of the 'repertoire' clauses in contracts preceding and succeeding his tenure reveal just how deeply the museum culture of the 1870s altered the direction of the Opéra's subsidy and, by extension, the official remit and function of the Opéra itself.⁷³ Disappearance of any

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ *Art musical* 14/10: 11 March 1875, 78 (*Tell*) and 14/14: 8 April 1875, 110 (*Hamlet*), both unsigned news items. The *Revue et Gazette musicale* comments more fully on the sets and compares those for Act II with the old ones (*RGM* 42/11: 14 March 1875, 84, unsigned).

⁷¹ Baker, *From the Score to the Stage*, 192. Baker finds this tradition disappointing for causing stagnation in the international aesthetics of opera production.

⁷² '*L'Africaine* étant le moins joué des chefs-d'œuvre de Meyerbeer, on pouvait, grâce à la distribution nouvelle, grâce aux costumes et aux décors neufs, se croire à une première représentation.' Un Monsieur de l'Orchestre [Arnold Mortier], *Les Soirées parisiennes de 1877* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1878), 484.

⁷³ David Grayson summarises the changing demands for 'new' works in his 'Finding a Stage for French Opera', in *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914*, ed. Annegret Fauser & Mark Everist (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 127-154, at 132-133. He sees changing loopholes within the context of a broad *status quo*; by contrast, I see a more clearly defined trajectory.

reference to the Louvre in mission statements after 1879 is misleading; the burden of the change appears in the paragraphs that routinely follow the listing of new works required each year. The recurring question is that which Halanzier asked of *Aida*: what constitutes a ‘new’ work (Table 5)? Foreign works needing translation, and old French repertory, formed the main categories over which the government representatives agreeing the contract gradually lowered their guard. In Perrin’s day, there was no chance of a translation counting as ‘new’; for Vaucorbeil the text allowed ministerial discretion for translations, and via the knotty language of its drafting they worried at the prospect of a new production of a ‘repertory’ work meriting the same status. By 1884 the case for ‘new’ translated works no longer needed to be made, but French repertory works still required special pleading. Finally in 1891, the two categories were merged and the bar to ‘new’ status lowered. The requisite six acts of new music had to be by French composers (Article 11), but the exceptions clause left composer nationality unspecified, and the general statement on repertoire (Article 9) had already opened the Opéra to ‘All kinds of opera and ballet’ [Toutes sortes de drame lyrique et de ballet] save for those that directly conflicted with the Opéra-Comique’s repertoire. Moreover it is one thing to require proof of a need [force majeure] for emergency measures before an established work can be mounted (Article 11); it is quite another to present an alternative of ‘recognised need’ [nécessité constatée]. At this latter point we may safely conclude that the concept of an operatic ‘repertory’ has won the day. While retaining all the usual clauses on new music, and even seeming to tighten them by mentioning that such music must be by French composers, the 1891 contract finally pushed the museum door wide open. It was precisely at this point that Wagner, not seen on a national Paris stage since *Rienzi* in 1869, and successfully re-introduced in the French regions from February 1891, began to be mounted at the Opéra.⁷⁴ More generally, state funding for new productions, revivals, and imported repertoire works became a policy norm, with the only remaining requirement for world premieres residing in a long-standing and oft-avoided clause favouring one work, from one winner of the Prix de Rome, every two years.

In the 1870s, however, the absence of newly-composed works remained a running sore among Halanzier’s detractors, and his most enduring world premiere hardly counted because it was not even an opera: it was a ballet. Where Perrin had given Paris Delibes’s *Coppélia* in 1870, Halanzier offered them *Sylvia* (1876). For full-length grand operas he could count only Edmond Membrée’s *L’Esclave* (which sank without trace after fifteen

⁷⁴ See Katharine Ellis, ‘How to Make Wagner Normal: *Lohengrin*’s “tour de France” of 1891/92’, *Cambridge Opera Journal* 25/2 (2013), 121-137, and Yannick Simon, ‘*Lohengrin*’: un tour de France, 1887-1891 (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

performances in 1874), Auguste Mermet's *Jeanne d'Arc* (which did likewise in 1876), Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore* (in repertory 1877 to 1879) and Gounod's *Polyeucte* (1878, fading quickly from view the following year). Smaller operas, including Ernest Reyer's *Erostrate*, which was Halanzier's first premiere in October 1871, made no impact, and while new ballets such as Ernest Guiraud's *Gretna-Green* or Gaston Salvayre's *Fandango* lasted much longer, as ballets they shared the same lack of status as *Sylvia*. The net result of these premieres was that Halanzier could stake a plausible claim to artist-director status only in 1877, after six years in post, with a world premiere of *Le Roi de Lahore* that launched Jules Massenet successfully into the world of opera. Indeed, at a banquet to celebrate the opera's 50th performance, and which coincided with the period of the handover to Vaucorbeil, Halanzier thanked Massenet for an opera that guaranteed his fame as the Opéra's manager.⁷⁵

Massenet's liminal presence as an opera composer in 1877 prompts further reflection on the nature of the operatic museum. Reviewing *Le Roi de Lahore* in the *Journal des débats*, Ernest Reyer started with a rallying cry of support: 'Give way to the youngsters!' [Place aux jeunes], and called for an end to the stone-throwing about a lack of new music. But he also pointed out that Massenet was, in a sense, a safe choice because he had already earned his spurs as a composer.⁷⁶ A contrasting interpretation of Massenet's reputation dates from two years later, when Juliette Adam cited in her memoirs a letter of 21 October 1879 from Edouard Lalo to an unnamed friend of hers. In it, Lalo had lamented Vaucorbeil's seeming lack of interest in his own *Le Roi d'Ys*:

by standing still amid change, the Paris Opéra will become not a Louvre, but a hospice for old men. / M. Vaucorbeil is taking refuge in the first article of his contract: 'The Opéra is not a theatre for experimentation'. M. Vaucorbeil should recall that his predecessor's sole claim to artistic credit was the creation of *Le Roi de Lahore*. / Massenet's reputation rested on his symphonic works; but for the Opéra he was a débutant all the riskier because people remembered the fiasco of his *opéra comique*.
..⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Report in *Ménestrel*, 45/26: 25 May 1879, 205.

⁷⁶ *Journal des débats*, 10 May 1877, 1-2.

⁷⁷ 'l'Opéra de Paris, restant immobile au milieu de ce mouvement, deviendra, non un Louvre, mais un hospice de vieillards. / M. Vaucorbeil se retranche derrière l'article premier de son cahier des charges: l'Opéra n'est pas un théâtre d'essai. M. Vaucorbeil devrait se rappeler que le seul titre artistique de son prédécesseur, c'est la création du *Roi de Lahore*. / Massenet était désigné par ses succès dans les concerts symphoniques; mais pour l'Opéra c'était un *débutant* d'autant plus dangereux qu'on se rappelait encore le fiasco de son opéra-comique.' Juliette Adam, *Après l'abandon de la revanche*, 17th edn (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, n.d.), 425.

Differences over whether putting on Massenet was brave or cautious expose the tensions of Article 1 (museum) versus Article 9 (new music) within the new official framework, but in doing so they also remind us that museums and galleries are not just repositories of the old. This is surely what Lalo meant when he contrasted the Louvre with a hospice for old men; he was indicating that the Louvre contained modern classics alongside historical ones—that the Opéra should be a ‘living’ museum in terms of works, and not just in terms of productions of established ones. He might equally well have pointed to the manner in which the annual Salon was, for artists who remained within certain stylistic bounds, a prelude to State acquisition and public display. In its gathering up of repertoires by Meyerbeer, Halévy, and others, and its famous rejections of Berlioz and Wagner, the Opéra, its management, and its public had functioned unofficially in this way since Véron’s tenure of the 1830s; under Halanzier, in the wake of the fire, and in a new building packed with historical references, the institution’s official remit had in a sense belatedly caught up with its traditions, the whole now packaged as a home for a particular sub-set of operatic classics—new, modern, and old alike—which invited living composers to engage in musical dialogue with the historical trajectory of the genre of grand opera. The crucial difference with past practice, and with traditions in the graphic arts, lay in the rarity with which new conversations reached the public domain.

CURATING THE MUSEUM: FROM PRODUCTIONS TO PERFORMERS

In the wake of press attacks about the profits he had reaped from his exercise in museum-creation, Halanzier published a brochure, seemingly in haste, which contained a digest of laudatory reviews of Massenet’s *Le Roi de Lahore*.⁷⁸ Via forty-four carefully selected passages liberally italicised where they indicated he was a ‘directeur-artiste’ worthy of the capital, Halanzier claimed the press was ‘all but unanimous regarding the work’s significance, the quality of its interpreters and the incomparable beauty of the staging’.⁷⁹ Several of his selected critics—for *Paris-Journal*, *Le Charivari*, *Le Figaro*, *Le Pays*, *L’Estafette*, *L’Entr’acte*, *La République des lettres*—referred explicitly to the ‘artistic’ quality of the production as proof that Halanzier had bested his detractors. Superlatives about a new benchmark in production quality were surpassed only by predictions that Halanzier’s prodigious feat of artistic splendour would never be bettered. The chorus of approval

⁷⁸ Anon., *Théâtre National de l’Opéra. Opinion de la presse sur ‘Le Roi de Lahore’* (Paris: Imp. Paul Dumont, [1877]).

⁷⁹ ‘pour ainsi dire unanime sur la grande valeur de l’œuvre, sur le mérite de ses interprètes et sur l’incomparable beauté de la mise en scène’, [Halanzier], *Opinion de la presse*, 1.

included old-stagers such as Oscar Comettant, Bénédict [Benoît] Jouvin, and Mark de Thémines, alongside young writers such as Octave Fouque and composers Victorin Joncières and Ernest Reyer—with Reyer, now a heavyweight in Berlioz's old role at the *Journal des débats*, chosen to close this extended 'revue des revues'.⁸⁰ References to brilliance, dazzling richness, luxury, splendour, colour, and light peppered every account of the scenery (painted by Jean-Baptiste Lavastre), costumes (designed by Eugène Lacoste), and ballet (choreographed by Louis Mérante), accompanied by warnings to wear dark glasses to the opera house as though for viewing a solar eclipse.⁸¹ Production style had remained unchanged, but as a feast for the eyes it was beyond compare.

Alongside the visual splendour Halanzier so doggedly underlined in his Massenet brochure there lay the recognition that the more operatic programming relied on old favourites, the more urgently it required a variety of high-quality singers. Here, too, he built on his regional experience, where his last tenures, at Marseille, Bordeaux, and Lyon, meant satisfying audiences who appeared keener on hearing new voices than on hearing new operas. Hence his practice of teasing them—drawing them back to the theatre night after night to present a new voice in his company and thereby to extend the traditional 'début' season, via traditional repertory, for as long as possible.⁸² Throughout his regional career he had worked within a system of resident companies where with the exception of short visits from touring singers, audiences heard the same voices in several different roles throughout an entire season. Singers were categorised according to *emplois*—standard French voice-types of which some were in use from the late eighteenth century to the Great War, and each of which implied a specific set of roles. However, Halanzier's letters of the mid-1860s to Perrin reveal how acutely aware he was of the need to secure Paris-based singers in order to keep his theatres full, and he took full advantage of a 'special relationship' with the Opéra in his pre-season publicity by listing, with Perrin's permission, the stars whose loan he had secured.⁸³

This behaviour constituted more than adherence to the existing tradition of brief visits 'en représentation' for a series of performances in niche roles. This latter was a

⁸⁰ Ibid., 23. 'Mark de Thémines' was one of the many pen-names of Achille-Théodore-Barthélemy Lauzières-Thémines, *dit* Marquis de Thémines.

⁸¹ *L'Union; Le Charivari*, cited in *ibid.*, 11 & 14

⁸² See Katharine Ellis, 'Unintended Consequences: Theatre Deregulation and Opera in France, 1864-1878', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22/3 (2011), 327-352, at 330.

⁸³ *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 444 Opéra, 1844-1870, II 'Relations avec les théâtres', letter of 12 September 1866 relating to his 1866/67 prospectus for the Grand-Théâtre, Marseille.

tradition which Halanzier knew well and had followed, for instance, when securing Marie Miolan-Carvalho, the first Marguerite, for a series of Marseille performances of Gounod's *Faust* in 1863: he bolted her performances onto his repertory-company's first run, doubtless with the intention of extending the opera's shelf-life among the Marseille subscribers.⁸⁴ Now, however, he sought to expand his regional repertoire company on a semi-permanent basis and to turn it into something closer to Paris, where instead of one first tenor, Perrin had four at his disposal.⁸⁵ In letter after letter he pleaded with Perrin to release tenors and sopranos especially, and to prolong their loan if successful, because, as Halanzier put it on 3 March 1867, 'I have 300 subscribers on my back' [300 abonnés sur le dos].⁸⁶ He also repeatedly suggested that he could not finish his season in good financial health unless he had a variety of singers to choose from, specifically because novelty in terms of new singers—rather than in terms of repertory—was what his public demanded. Finally, it is significant that irrespective of whether the letters came from his tenure at Marseille, Bordeaux, or Lyon, his requests related uniquely to singers capable of singing principal grand-opera roles. These were disproportionately what his subscribers craved, and he was realistic about who had the power to keep him solvent.⁸⁷

Once in Paris Halanzier extended the principle: beyond questions of production quality, his defence of 1875 concentrated on his expansion of the company. In comparison with Perrin in 1870 he had more than doubled the number of principal tenors (from four to nine) and sopranos (from seven to sixteen); for the ballet company he had retained the same number of men, but nearly doubled the number of women (from seventeen to 29).⁸⁸ Soprano Maria Miolan-Carvalho and tenor Jean-Baptiste Faure remained in place but among new arrivals was young talent such as the tenors Edmond Vergnet and Ladislaus Mierzwinski, and the already internationally established Austrian soprano Gabrielle Krauss; the much-expanded company was bolstered further by visiting appointments including international stars such as Adelina Patti—at the height of her powers—and her Swedish rival Christina Nilsson. Rita Sangalli brought experience from Milan and London to head a new roster of

⁸⁴ Victor Combarous, *L'Histoire du Grand-Théâtre de Marseille, 31 octobre 1787 – 13 octobre 1919* [1927] (repr. Marseille: Laffitte, 1980), 102.

⁸⁵ For detail on the size of the Opéra during Perrin's tenure, see the comparative discussion below.

⁸⁶ *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 444, letter 29 (3 March 1867).

⁸⁷ It is also entirely possible that Halanzier secured Parisian guest singers from the beginning of the season in order to insulate himself against the vagaries of the débuts system, where a fine singer could be rejected for the entire year on the whim of the audience, or after an uncharacteristically weak 'audition' performance.

⁸⁸ Halanzier, *Exposé de ma gestion*, 3.

principal ballerinas, while French dancers were led by the Mérante dynasty, with Marius Petipa's student Louis Mérante as ballet-master from 1872, and four other members of the family in teaching and principal dancer roles by 1875. All contributed to Halanzier's emphasis on performance variety, and to his presentation of the familiar (repertory) rendered newly attractive through the deployment of different casts, supported by new staging, in a new building. Novelty, in other words, came from every artistic parameter except music and libretto.

CONCLUSIONS

In 1875, Halanzier claimed to preside over the world's finest opera house. While plenty of critics, including supportive ones, had questioned the Opéra's international primacy by the end of his tenure, they were more likely to agree with his secondary claim, which was that he had restored the Opéra to its former glory.⁸⁹ It was a restoration with costs as well as benefits—the financial costs historically significant because of the new manner in which they fell on the public purse, and the artistic ones for living composers both paradoxical and far-reaching. There had been hints of both in earlier periods, when complaints of repertorial stagnation filled the newspapers; and notably, Second-Empire Paris had seen a similar gravitational pull from new to old repertoire at the Théâtre-Lyrique.⁹⁰ But what happened at the Opéra in the early Third Republic represented a step change. The Théâtre-Lyrique, specifically, had been geared towards a succession of small-scale débutant works, and was pitifully subsidised when it was subsidised at all; the flagship Opéra was the most generously supported theatre in the whole of France, and had since the time of Napoléon I fulfilled an educational role to supply the French nation with large-scale and either French or French-assimilated material of significant artistic worth. Letting go of that role involved fate, practice preceding policy, and a new alignment of official desiderata with audience taste for the familiar.

Halanzier's Paris experience of the 1870s placed a closure notice on a long-standing educational mission at the Opéra and said something rather uncomfortable: that while critics such as Adolphe Jullien might complain of complacency and lament that 'music was finished', a critical mass of opera-goers either remained indifferent, or preferred the familiar

⁸⁹ Halanzier, *Exposé de ma gestion*, 4.

⁹⁰ See Katharine Ellis, 'Systems Failure in Operatic Paris: the Acid Test of the Théâtre-Lyrique', in *Music, Theater, and Cultural Transfer: Paris, 1830-1914*, ed. Mark Everist & Annegret Fauser (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press), 49-71.

(not least as a backdrop to socialising), or had transferred its attention definitively towards performance and production. All the while Halanzier created a second irony: this ‘regional’ manager, with forty years of service outside Paris, starved the very regions he had once served of the regular supply of new opera his national operatic institution had been created to send out. Like his predecessors Halanzier quickly took new failures off the stage; but the old repertoire remained, and when he left the Opéra he was preparing to revive the grandmother of them all, Auber’s *La Muette de Portici* of 1828. Moreover, what looked like regional backwardness to French critics was, for better or worse, to become a new international paradigm of public (or philanthropic) funding for new productions rather than for new commissions—an increasingly canonic operatic environment in which the repertoire was refreshed primarily through new interpretations.

Nevertheless Halanzier’s national museum of opera, created with public money, was deeply problematic in the context of a struggling grand-opera industry in France. Grand opera was not, after all, specifically French. It was cosmopolitan;⁹¹ hence its stylistic eclecticism and the presence of so many works by foreign composers within the repertoire. Before 1870, that was a strength: Paris was the genre’s home, and the source of each work’s imprimatur, while the international market provided its field of operation. But after 1870, when heightened nationalism forced the question of the Frenchness of new composition in Paris, Halanzier was badly placed to respond with proof that living French composers could equal their forebears, whether French or foreign. In this respect Wagner, avenging decades of operatic maltreatment in Paris, had the last laugh. The wishful thinking of his *Eine Kapitulation* was historiographically prophetic in its portrayal of both Émile Perrin and Victor Hugo as yesterday’s men—wedded to the cult of *Guillaume Tell* and *Robert-le-Diable* and waxing lyrical about the civilising influence of French operatic culture on the artistic afterlives of Goethe (Gounod) and Schiller (Verdi).⁹² Halanzier ended up playing the role Wagner had designated for Perrin; but while he could, as Wagner put it, ‘save’ the Opéra, he could not rescue its signature genre. Grand opera as such was no longer attractive to foreign composers. *Aida* came to the Garnier having already done the international rounds, and was never assimilated in the manner of a Meyerbeer work: unbeknownst to Halanzier or to anyone else, the Opéra’s function to validate the new, and to absorb the cosmopolitan into the French, had already ceased in 1867, with *Don Carlos*. Progressively, from the 1880s, the Opéra-Comique took the lead for new French opera as an inspirational

⁹¹ Anselm Gerhard, *The Urbanization of Opera: Music Theater in Paris in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 388-408.

⁹² Richard Wagner’s *Prose Works*, vol. 3, 16 – 18; 33.

force at home and abroad, courtesy of a reworked and relaunched *Carmen* and through the hybrid genre of *dramas lyriques* by Thomas and Massenet and the French *verismo* of Bruneau and Charpentier.⁹³ In terms of local and (worse) international opera repertoire, then, Halanzier had helped create a living museum of grand opera too late—which was tantamount to creating the wrong museum in the first place. It is no wonder that the Garnier's tally of museum pieces was allowed to shrink in early 1894 when another fire took out Meyerbeer's works together with Halévy's *La Juive* and other, more recent, repertory: *Robert-le-Diable* and *La Juive* disappeared; *Les Huguenots* and *Le Prophète* were restored in short order; *L'Africaine* seems to have been retired, then revived in 1902, and promptly retired again.⁹⁴

There are several possible dates at which one might argue for the beginning of the end for French grand opera as a leading international art form. *L'Africaine* in 1865, following Meyerbeer's death the previous year; *Don Carlos* in 1867 as the last foreign investment in the form; *Aida* in 1871 as a displaced hangover from a bygone age. In institutional terms, one might put in a bid for 15 July 1879—the date on which the unfortunate Vaucorbeil took over from Halanzier in a not-so-new palace no one could afford to maintain on less than maximum receipts, with no impending world fair to bring huge numbers of tourists to the building, and dependent on revenues from new productions of a repertory outpaced at home by an increasingly strong Opéra-Comique and abroad by the pan-European embrace of Wagner and the continued popularity of Verdi.⁹⁵ Few Opéra premieres of the 1880s and 1890s became the desired 'modern classics' implied by the curatorial language of state contracts. Meanwhile, Vaucorbeil died in 1884 before he could go bankrupt at the helm of an opera house living on borrowed time, cemented into the

⁹³ Hugh Macdonald, 'From *opéra-comique* to *opéra-sérieux*', *Revista de musicología* 16/6 (1993), 3113-3121; Gerhard, *Urbanization*, 401-402. However, even here, Paris began trading in second-hand operas. Massenet, notably, had much of his work premiered in London, Brussels, or Monte Carlo.

⁹⁴ Patureau, *Le Palais Garnier*, 282; Huebner, 'After 1850', table of Palais Garnier performances by year, 301.

⁹⁵ In terms of numbers of performances, Gerhard sketches a sanguine picture of grand opera holding its own against Verdi and Wagner elsewhere in Europe until the 1920s and 1930s, with the question of 'leadership' in France becoming problematic only around 1900 (Gerhard, *Urbanization*, 401-403). However, the runaway successes of *Faust* and *Carmen*, both of which had more than 800 performances at the Opéra and Opéra-Comique respectively between their premieres and the end of the century, suggest that the question of internal leadership had shifted somewhat earlier; while the rise of Wagnerism after the composer's death, and the continuing activity and popularity of Verdi, dampened grand opera's influence abroad. For international statistics, see Baker, *From the Score to the Stage*, 252.

national museum of its own past and yet determined on account of nationalist fear and loathing to keep Wagner at bay. Progressive contractual leniency over translations as ‘new’ works allowed more Verdi to appear in the 1880s, but not until September 1891, with its long-awaited *Lohengrin*, would the Paris Opéra begin to re-internationalise itself along the Wagnerian lines that animated so much operatic culture elsewhere.⁹⁶ In so doing the Opéra would, throughout the 1890s, remain conservative.⁹⁷ It would also appear ‘provincial’ in international terms, with France slower even than Italy to adopt the European museum’s latest German fashions. By 1891, *Lohengrin* had been staged in Italy for twenty years, including at La Scala in 1873 with none other than Halanzier’s future company member, Gabrielle Krauss, as Elsa: eighteen years after his death Wagner was ‘modern’, not ‘new’, and in attending their first productions at the Garnier, those Parisians who had not tasted their fully-staged Wagner in Brussels or elsewhere cast themselves in the mould of French regional audiences for whom ‘new’ works—of whatever vintage—were already old news in the capital.

Halanzier, then, oversaw one paradoxical situation and bequeathed another. The first operated on two levels, domestic and international. Domestically, he presided over an Opéra whose audience taste he correctly judged had become ‘regional’ in line with his own management strengths. Yet on an international level neither he nor his public was backward in the sense that his detractors liked to emphasise: on the contrary, his institution of a museum represented the most modern international trends in musical consumption and canon-formation, while its very nationalistic impulse would find a parallel at Wagner’s Bayreuth a few years later. At the same time, through his selection of museum exhibits Halanzier bequeathed a dinosaur. Its core holdings of grand opera were soon to become threatened, if not quite extinct, native species in the international arena, while new examples by Massenet or Saint-Saëns departed significantly from its generic norms. The ‘native’ or ‘naturalised’ aspect of grand opera became a double-edged sword. Its home at the Garnier was proudly cosmopolitan *and* French while the genre remained vigorous; but it became merely national—provincial, effectively—at a moment of nationalist need when it neither

⁹⁶ A list of the eleven foreign premieres mounted between 1875 and 1904 takes in three by Verdi (one a revival of *Il trovatore*), seven by Wagner (including *Lohengrin* of 1891) and one by a third composer—Leoncavallo’s *I pagliacci*, as *Paillasse*. Puccini is absent from the list. *F-Pan AJ*¹³ 1202 Opéra. Comptabilité. For a table showing the rise of Wagner at the expense of grand opera at the Garnier from 1891, see Huebner, ‘From 1850’, 301.

⁹⁷ Huebner notes that if the Opéra had not embraced Wagner in the 1890s, it would have risked seeming ‘hopelessly antediluvian’. *Ibid.*, 305.

attracted foreign composers nor generated large numbers of exportable French works.⁹⁸ At least one of Halanzier's contemporaries, the critic Mark de Thémines, detected something of this reputational insecurity as early as the mid-1870s. Implicitly laying the problem at the door of a regional theatre director over-promoted to the capital, his fears nevertheless succinctly articulated the point at which international and national provincialisms, and the new museum culture, converged. Amid nationalist squabbles over the repertory planned for the opening night of the Palais Garnier, he counselled against the French acting as though their 'local' was necessarily everyone else's 'international'. The Opéra, he wrote, 'is like the Louvre, where beside the French masters, we can view those of foreign schools. Let's not turn it into a municipal gallery.'⁹⁹

Table 1: Halanzier's career

Dates	Town/activity	Commentary
1848 – 1855	Strasbourg	Resigns mid-contract due to financial difficulty
1856 – 1857	Lyon	One-year appointment
1858 – 1861	Rouen	Contract extended
1861 – 1864	Marseille	Resigns on principle before 1864 deregulation legislation takes effect; avoids having to survive subsidy cut
1865 – 1867	Marseille	Resigns mid-contract because of subsidy dispute
1868 – 1869	Bordeaux	Resigns mid-contract possibly due to family illness
May – July	Lyon	Resigns due to 'force majeure' of war

⁹⁸ See Huebner, 'After 1850', 303.

⁹⁹ 'Elle est comme le Musée du Louvre, où, à côté des maîtres de l'école française, on voit ceux des autres écoles. N'en faisons pas un musée municipal.' *Art musical*, 13/49: 3 December 1874, 389-390, at 390.

1870		
1871 – 1879	Paris Opéra	Provisional contract initially; cemented November 1871, then 1874 with new agreement for Palais Garnier; resigns shortly before end of term due to financial losses
1880 – 1896	President, Association des Artistes Dramatiques	

Table 2 Halanzier's Opéra premières

Title	Hall, date	Genre, librettist(s), composer
	Salle Le Peletier	
Erostrate	16 Oct. 1871	Opera 2 a., Méry, Pacini; Ernest Reyer
La Coupe du Roi de Thulé	10 Jan. 1873	Opera 3 a., L. Gallet, Ed. Blau; Eugène Diaz
Le Forgeron de Gretna-Green	5 March 1873	Ballet-Pantomime. 1 a., Nuitter, Mérante; Ernest Guiraud
	Salle Ventadour	
L'Esclave	17 July 1874	Opera 5 a., Éd. Foussier, Got; Edmond Membrée
	Palais Garner	
Jeanne d'Arc	5 April 1876	Opera 4 a., Auguste Mermet
Sylvia	24 June 1876	Ballet 2 a., J. Barbier, Mérante; Léo Delibes
Le Roi de Lahore	27 April 1877	Opera 5 a., L. Gallet; Jules Massenet
Le Fandango	26 Nov. 1877	Ballet 1 a., Meilhac, Halévy, Mérante; Salvayre
Polyeucte	7 Oct. 1878	Opera 5 a., J. Barbier, M. Carré; Charles Gounod
La Reine Berthe	27 Dec. 1878	Opera 2 a., J. Barbier; Victorin Joncières

Yedda	17 Jan. 1879	Ballet 3 a., Gille, Mortier, Mérante; Olivier Métra
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Adapted from Mark Everist and Sarah Gutsche-Miller, *List of Paris Music Drama*

Performances, hosted by the Francophone Music Criticism project:

<http://music.sas.ac.uk/fmc/collections/bibliographical-resources-and-work-in-progress>

(accessed 4 August 2014).

Table 3: Halanzier's comparison of his productivity with that of his predecessor Émile Perrin

1 May 1866 to 2 September 1870 (4 years, 4 months)	1 November 1871 to 15 June 1876 (4 years, 7.5 months)
Verdi, <i>Don Carlos</i>	Diaz, <i>La Coupe du Roi de Thulé</i>
Duprato, <i>La Fiancée de Corinthe</i>	Membrée, <i>L'Esclave</i>
Thomas, <i>Hamlet</i>	Mermet, <i>Jeanne d'Arc</i>
Delibes, <i>La Source</i>	Guiraud, <i>Le Forgeron de Gretna Green</i>
Delibes, <i>Coppélia</i>	Delibes, <i>Sylvia</i>

Source: Olivier Halanzier, *Théâtre National de l'Opéra: à Messieurs les membres de la Commission du Budget* (Paris: 1876), 6

Table 4: Paris Opéra mission statements, 1866—1891

Perrin 1866 Art. 1 Le Directeur sera tenu de diriger l'Opéra avec la splendeur qui convient à ce premier théâtre Impérial, de le maintenir dans l'Éclat de luxe qui le distingue des autres théâtres, tant sous le rapport du nombre et du talent des artistes, que sous le rapport de la richesse des décorations, des costumes et de la mise en scène.

[The Director will be expected to direct the Opéra with the splendour which is appropriate to this premier imperial theatre, to maintain it in the brilliant sumptuousness which distinguishes it from the other theatres, as much through the number and talent of the artists as through the richness of the sets, the costumes and the stagings.]

Halanzier 1871 Art. 1 Le Directeur sera tenu de diriger l'Opéra avec le dignité et l'éclat qui conviennent au premier théâtre lyrique national. L'Opéra devra toujours se distinguer des

autres théâtres par le choix des œuvres anciennes ou modernes qui y sont représentées, par le talent des artistes, comme par la richesse des décorations, des costumes et de la mise en scène.

[The Director will be expected to direct the Opéra with the dignity and brilliance appropriate to the premier national theatre. The Opéra must accordingly distinguish itself from the other theatres via the selection of early or modern works that it presents, through the talent of the artists and through the richness of the sets, the costumes and the stagings.]

Halanzier 1874 Art. 1 Le Directeur de l'Opéra sera tenu de donner aux représentations de l'Académie Nationale de Musique la splendeur qui convient à la première scène lyrique française. / L'Opéra devra donc se distinguer des autres théâtres et par le choix des œuvres anciennes ou modernes qu'on y représentera et par la supériorité des artistes du chant, de la danse et de l'orchestre. Les décors devront être exécutés dans les ateliers les plus en renom; les costumes et les accessoires seront dessinés par les artistes le plus habiles. En un mot, le Directeur devra faire tous les sacrifices qui lui seront imposés par le respect de l'art.

[The Director of the Opéra will be expected to give performances at the Académie Nationale de Musique the splendour which is appropriate to the premier theatre in France. / The Opéra must accordingly distinguish itself from the other theatres both via the selection of early or modern works that it presents and via the superiority of its singers, its dancers and its orchestra. The sets must be constructed in the most renowned workshops and the accessories will be designed by the most accomplished artists. In short, the Director must make every sacrifice that artistic respect demands of him.]

Vaucorbeil 1879 Art. 1 Le directeur de l'Opéra sera tenu de donner aux représentations de l'académie nationale de musique, la splendeur qu'il convient à la première scène lyrique française. / L'Opéra n'est pas un théâtre d'essai: il doit être considéré comme le musée de la musique; il devra donc se distinguer des autres théâtres par le choix des œuvres anciennes et modernes de toutes les écoles qu'on y représentera et par la supériorité des artistes du chant, de la danse & de l'orchestre. / Les décors devront être exécutés dans les ateliers les plus en renom; les costumes et les accessoires seront dessinés par les artistes le plus habiles. En un mot, le Directeur devra faire tous les sacrifices qui lui seront imposés par le respect de l'art.

[The director of the Opéra will be expected to give performances at the Académie Nationale de Musique the splendour which is appropriate to the premier theatre in France. / The Opéra is not a theatre for experimentation: it should be regarded as the museum of music; it must

accordingly distinguish itself from the other theatres both via the selection of early or modern works that it presents and via the superiority of its singers, its dancers and its orchestra. The sets must be constructed in the most renowned workshops and the accessories will be designed by the most accomplished artists. In short, the Director must make every sacrifice that artistic respect demands of him.]

Ritt 1884 Art. 1 Le Directeur sera tenu de diriger l'Opéra avec le dignité et l'éclat qui conviennent au premier théâtre lyrique national. L'Opéra devra toujours se distinguer des autres théâtres par le choix des œuvres anciennes ou modernes qui y sont représentées, par le talent des artistes, comme par la richesse des décorations, des costumes et de la mise en scène.

[The Director will be expected to direct the Opéra with the dignity and brilliance appropriate to the premier national theatre. The Opéra must always distinguish itself from the other theatres via the selection of early or modern works that it presents, through the talent of the artists and through the richness of the sets, the costumes and the stagings.]

Gailhard 1891 Art. 1 Le Directeur sera tenu de diriger l'Opéra avec le dignité et l'éclat qui conviennent au premier théâtre lyrique national. L'Opéra devra toujours se distinguer des autres théâtres par le choix et la variété des œuvres anciennes ou modernes qui y sont représentées, par le talent des artistes, comme par le goût et la valeur artistique des décorations, des costumes et de la mise en scène.

[The Director will be expected to direct the Opéra with the dignity and brilliance appropriate to the premier national lyric theatre. The Opéra must always distinguish itself from the other theatres via the selection and variety of early or modern works that it presents, through the talent of the artists and through the taste and artistic value of the sets, the costumes and the stagings.]

Sources: *F-Pan* AJ¹³ 1187 (1866, 1874 modifications to 1871), 1879, 1884, 1891; *F-Po* Arch. De l'Opéra P. A. 1 1866/1871 (1871).

Table 5: Cahiers des charges articles regarding translations and older repertoire, 1866–1891

Perrin, 1866, Art. 9 [...] Les traductions d'ouvrages étrangers ne seront jamais comptées comme ouvrages nouveaux.

[Translations of foreign works will never be counted as new works.]

Halanzier, 1871, Art. 9 [...] Les traductions d'ouvrages étrangers ne seront jamais comptées comme ouvrages nouveaux.

[Translations of foreign works will never be counted as new works.]

Halanzier 1874, Art. 9 [...] Ces ouvrages [i.e. the required 6 acts of new opera and ballet] dont le compte sera fait tous les deux ans, sont indépendants des ouvrages à monter dans le plus bref délai, au moyen du crédit spécial de 2,400,000 francs.

[These works, for which the accounting will take place every two years, are separate from the works that are to be mounted as soon as possible, using the exceptional grant of 2,400,000 francs.]

Vaucorbeil 1879, Art. 9 [...] Les traductions d'ouvrages étrangers pourront, exceptionnellement et avec l'autorisation du Ministère, être comptées comme ouvrages nouveaux. [...] / Dans le cas où le Directeur remettrait à la scène un ouvrage ancien nécessitant des transformations et une mise en scène considérable, le Ministère se réserve le droit d'apprécier, s'il y a lieu, de considérer cet ouvrage comme un ouvrage nouveau; cette faculté ne pourra s'exercer plus de deux fois pendant la durée du privilège.

[Translations of foreign works can, exceptionally and with Ministerial authorisation, be counted as new works. [...] / Where the Director puts on a revival of an old work necessitating reworking and extensive staging, the Minister reserves the right to appraise, if the circumstances warrant it, whether the work can be considered as a new one; this option may be exercised no more than twice during the term of the contract.]

Ritt 1884, Art. 9 [...] Les traductions d'ouvrages étrangers pourront, exceptionnellement et avec l'autorisation du Ministère, être comptées comme ouvrages nouveaux. [...] / Dans le cas où le Directeur remettrait à la scène un ouvrage ancien nécessitant des transformations et une mise en scène considérable, le Ministère se réserve le droit d'apprécier s'il y a lieu, de considérer cet ouvrage comme un ouvrage nouveau.

[Translations of foreign works can, exceptionally and with Ministerial authorisation, be counted as new works. Where the Director puts on a revival of an old work necessitating reworking and extensive staging, the Minister reserves the right to appraise, if the circumstances warrant it, whether the work can be considered as a new one.]

Ritt 1884, annotations (undated), Art. 8 [...] Les traductions d'ouvrages étrangers qui n'auront pas été représentés à l'Opéra seront comptés comme ouvrages nouveaux. [...] / Dans le cas où le Directeur remettrait à la scène un ouvrage ancien nécessitant des transformations et une mise en scène considérable, le Ministère se réserve le droit d'apprécier s'il y a lieu, de considérer cet ouvrage comme un ouvrage nouveau.

[Translations of foreign works which have not been put on at the Opéra will be counted as new works. [...] / Where the Director puts on a revival of an old work necessitating reworking and extensive staging, the Minister reserves the right to appraise, if the circumstances warrant it, whether the work can be considered as a new one.]

Gailhard, 1891, Art. 11 Dans le cas où, par suite de force majeure ou de nécessité constatée, le Directeur désirerait remettre à la scène un ouvrage déjà représenté en France ou à l'étranger, et de le faire entrer en ligne de compte à titre d'ouvrage nouveau, il devra demander l'autorisation du Ministre. Cette autorisation ne pourra être accordée que si cet ouvrage exige des frais de mise en scène comparables à ceux d'un ouvrage nouveau.

[Where, following an emergency or recognised need, the Director wishes to re-mount a work that has already been performed in France or abroad, and to have it counted as a new work, he must request Ministerial authorisation. This authorisation cannot be granted unless this work requires expenditure on staging comparable to that of a new work.]

Sources: *F-Pan* AJ¹³ 1187 (1866, 1874 modifications to 1871), 1879, 1884, undated amendments to 1884, 1891; *F-Po* Arch. De l'Opéra P. A. 1 1866/1871 (1871).

Pl. 1

Caricature of Halanzier at the Grand-Théâtre, Bordeaux, by V[ictor]. Collodion, dated 1868.
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Pl. 2

Caricature of Halanzier at the Paris Opéra, Salle Le Peletier, by Alfred Le Petit, *Le charivari* vol. 44: 6 October 1875, n.p. caricature no. 222. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.